



MEDIA RELEASE

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Bond Ratings Endorse City's Vibrant Economic Growth

Greenville, SC... The City of Greenville's sound financial operations and economic vitality were reaffirmed when Fitch Ratings (Fitch) recently issued the City a AA+ bond rating, matching the AA+ rating issued to the City by Standard and Poor's. Additionally, Moody's Investors Service affirmed the City's sound financial status by issuing a Aa2 rating in their latest report.

At a time when many other cities have experienced declining financial fortunes, the rating agencies mentioned the city government's conservative fund balance policies and strong capital planning as well as the City's impressive per capita retail sales and revitalized downtown. "No city in South Carolina has a higher bond rating," said Mayor Knox White when the rating was announced at a recent Council meeting. Only the state of South Carolina, Greenville County and the Greenville Water System maintain higher ratings. All of these entities have a much larger population base than the City of Greenville.

Council Member Garry Coulter, Finance Committee Chair, attributes the high rating to careful planning and management of the City's resources. "We've worked hard to maintain our policy of building reserves, matching expense needs with revenue sources and sticking to a budgetary plan," he says. "For example, the City has a 5-year, fully-funded Capital Improvement Plan. The City's high bond rating is the result of this level of planning."

The Fitch report also cited “the City’s role as the commercial and retail center for the economically strong and diverse Greenville area,” with “per capita retail sales about *three times* state and national averages.” Additionally, the City boasts above average wealth levels. Greenville’s revitalized downtown commercial corridor, a recent winner of the 2003 Great American Main Street Award, was also cited as an economic strength for the City.

The AA+/AA+/Aa2 ratings were assigned to the City’s general obligation bonds, series 2003 and the city’s \$6.2 million in outstanding general obligation bonds. The money generated by the sale of these bonds will be used in part to fund projects identified in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. Major projects earmarked for funding include:

- Road improvements at \$2,000,000
- Neighborhood infrastructure improvements to accommodate new housing programs at \$1,150,000
- Landscaping at \$500,000
- Park improvements at \$500,000
- Bike paths at \$430,000